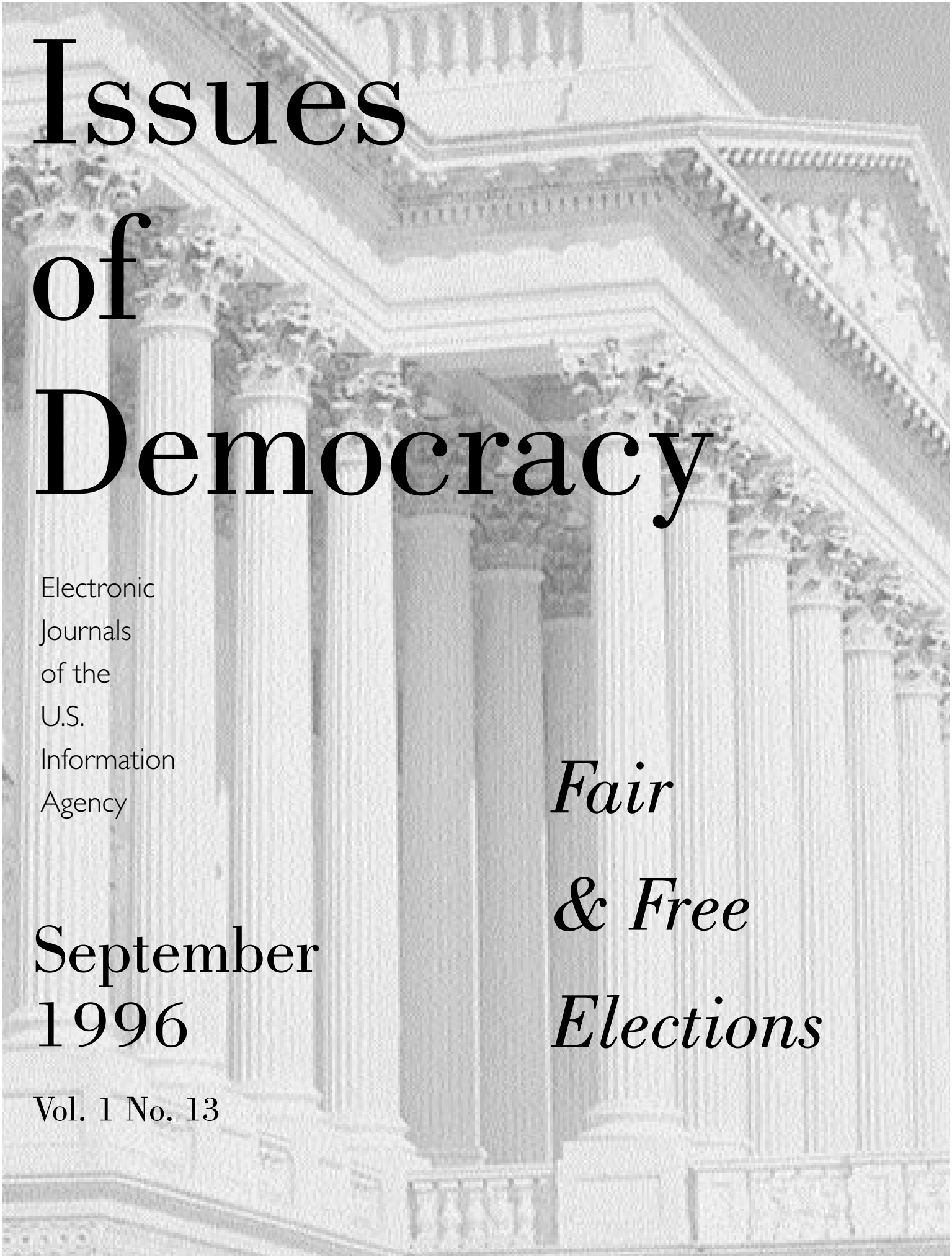


Issues of Democracy

Electronic Journals of the U.S. Information Agency

Fair & Free Elections

September 1996

Vol. 1 No. 13

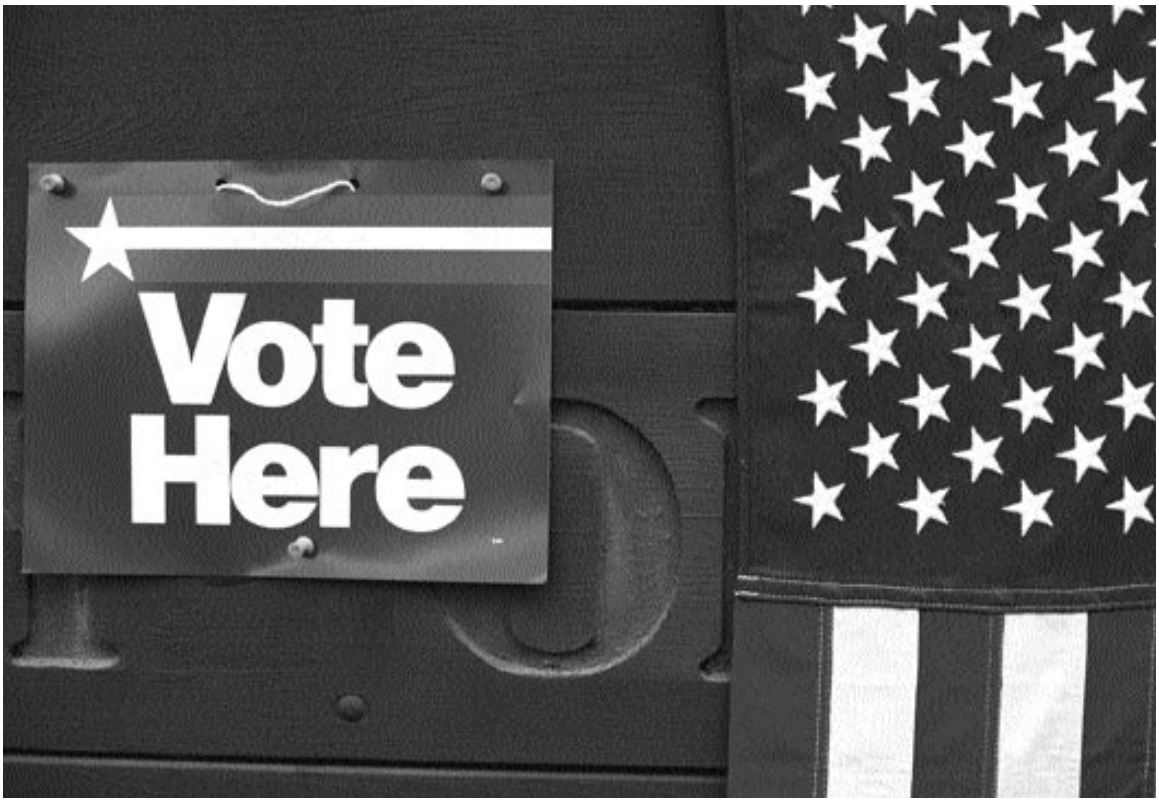
From the Editors

Fair & Free Elections

The theme of this issue is fair and free elections and their critical role for the continuance of democracy. A nation can only truly be "of the people, by the people and for the people" when proper procedures are followed in administering the way people choose their leaders.

In this issue we examine fair and free elections from several perspectives. William Kimberling of the Federal Election Commission, which regulates campaign financing, points out that his commission's role is to see that individual as well as organizational contributions do not wield undue influence over the political process. Carolyn Barta examines how fairly and how well the media provide citizens with information on the candidates and the issues. Herbert E. Alexander provides a historical review of campaign-financing practices and looks at the impact of recent attempts to reform them. David Pitts assesses the effects of third-party efforts in a two-party political atmosphere. Jim Morrill takes a behind-the-scenes look at election-day operations within a North Carolina county.

For general and detailed information on the U.S. presidential elections, see the U.S. Information Agency's 96 Elections site on the World Wide Web: "http//www.usia.gov/elections/index.htm"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Electronic Journals of the U.S. Information Agency

Vol. 1 No. 13

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September 1996

Keeping Track of Campaign Contributions

An interview with William Kimberling of the Federal Election Commission

It takes a lot of money to run for national political office in the United States. A major function of the U.S. Federal Election Commission (FEC) is to regulate campaign financing so that particular contributors —individuals as well as organizations— do not wield undue influence over the political process. William C. Kimberling, deputy director of the FEC's Office of Election Administration, discusses his agency's role and responsibilities with contributing editor Paul Malamud.

Visit the FEC's Web Site at "http://www.fec.gov."

Question: One of the main functions of the Federal Election Commission is to keep track of donations made by corporations, unions, private individuals, and various organizations to the political parties and candidates. Why is the tracking of funds so important to the conduct of free and fair elections?

Kimberling: It isn't merely the tracking of the sources of campaign contributions that's important. Tracking is important mainly to enforce the law which limits how much can be contributed to any candidate from any one source. The whole theory behind our law is to prevent dominance in the economic sector from spilling over to dominance in the political sector; and so to limit contributions from sources of great wealth causes us to have to track who gives what and to whom.

The idea is to prevent, for example, wealthy individuals from giving from their private wealth to candidates for public office. And we do that simply by limiting what individuals can contribute to candidates seeking federal office, and that is $1,000 for any given election. We also have to worry about

corporations and unions, which are sources of great wealth. They are prohibited completely from contributing anything, either cash or services, to candidates seeking federal office. They are, however, permitted to form what are called Political Action Committees or PACs.

Before the Federal Election Campaign Act—which passed Congress in 1971 and as amended created the Federal Election Commission—it was a suspicion of the country that there was a lot more to politics that we weren't seeing, that in fact, sources of great wealth were having undue influence over politicians whom they bankrolled for election. This law was designed to prevent that.

The law does not limit what candidates can spend for their election; rather, it limits how much they can receive from any one source.

Q: Can you describe these Political Action Committees (PACs)?

A: When I speak of a PAC's treasury, I mean a campaign war chest, the money that's in the PAC. The way the money gets into the PAC must be reported to us. When a PAC forms, it must first report to us and then must report all the sources that put money into the PAC fund. In the case of a corporation, these sources are limited to the managers, the owners, and the stockholders of the corporation as individuals. The profits of the corporation itself, the assets of the corporation, cannot flow into the PAC.

However, in order for the PAC or for the company to have its interests represented, individual contributors can build up their little PAC fund. But even then PACs are limited to $5,000 in what they can contribute to any given candidate.

Similarly, unions must draw individual contributions from their members to form their PAC fund. And any other organization, say a conservation organization such as the Sierra Club—or philosophically conservative PACs or liberal PACs—must draw its resources from individual contributions that must be reported to us. In that way, the Federal Election Commission is in a position to track all political money back to individual contributions. We have therefore built a barrier to prevent corporations, unions, or other interest groups from using any assets of the organization to support or oppose candidates for federal office.

Q: Why did the effect of political contributions on free and fair elections become an issue over the course of U.S. history?

A: Some of the problems emerged toward the end of the nineteenth century when huge sources of great wealth began to play in politics. At the time, that was just considered "part of the game." In those days, campaigns weren't all that expensive. Candidates could pretty much win elections by doing "stump speeches," riding around the countryside on a horse or later on a train—"whistle-stop" campaigns were standard. That wasn't very expensive. The real problem came in the 1960s, with the advent of the jet plane, which is expensive, and especially the advent of television. Television is terribly expensive to advertise on; and in our system of government there is no way that the government can compel the television stations to provide free time to candidates or parties, and even if we could I'm not sure how we would arrange it. So it's very much of a free-market campaign system. You buy the time that you can afford.

Well, if you add the cost of massive jet transportation around a country 3,000 miles across, to the cost of television advertising, which is huge, especially in a major media marketplace—Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago—that's what drove the cost of campaigning up.

The cost of campaigning meant that candidates seeking federal office could no longer pay for their own campaigns—they had to go with their hands out to people who had money, to sources of great wealth. It was then that we began to fear that these sources of great wealth —individuals, corporations and unions—were

contributing this money to candidates not simply out of the goodness of their hearts, to exert some influence if the person was elected. This was a suspicion heavy on the minds of everyone, and it was pretty much confirmed by the Watergate scandal during the Nixon administration in the 1970s. Among other things, investigators found that corporations had "laundered" money through various Caribbean and Mexican banks in order to funnel contributions—in violation of a 1912 law forbidding it—into political hands. The embarrassment of that merely confirmed what everyone had suspected all along. People rebelled against the notion of not knowing who was paying how much to whom and what they might be getting in return. The Watergate incident resulted in the passage of [amendments to] the Federal Election Campaign Act, which then sought to limit, in the way I've described, the influence of great wealth.

Originally, these records of contributions were maintained by the respective chambers of Congress but they found that unworkable, and so they created the Federal Election Commission to perform its duties for all federal offices—Senate offices, House offices, and the president.

Q: In your view, what have your successes been over the past 25 years?

A: I think it would be fair to say that the law has worked for the most part. Most politicians, believe it or not, are fairly honest and they want to obey the law. Besides, it's terrible on your campaign if the Federal Election Commission has to investigate your activity. So, for the most part, it has brought about the discipline it was intended to bring about and has limited the influence of wealth.

Inevitably, once the political community understood the structure of the law there were rather artful attempts at circumventing the law; and this is the battle that we've fought ever since. They're a very creative lot out there. They attempt sometimes to create foundations or to contribute to the party rather than to candidates in an effort to exert the influence indirectly. It's a continuing battle. There's no fixed state—things are in a state of evolution.

Q: Is this what is meant by "soft money"—money not regulated by the FEC given directly to parties supposedly for voter registration activities or similar activities in the public interest—that ends up being used for partisan political purposes?

A: I'm not so sure in my heart that it's a bad thing if the money flows into the political parties. I would prefer that to money flowing directly into the pockets of the candidates. I'm less concerned that a political party can be purchased or unduly influenced by great wealth than that an individual might be, so I don't view this situation with the alarm that some news commentators do. If the Congress wants to do something about it, it will. The Federal Election Commission does not make law, and so we must look to the Congress for any remedies to any problems.

Q: Can an institution regulate elections, if it's funded by the U.S. Congress?

A: To the degree that I believe that national legislatures in democratic countries should always control funding, I don't see any other solution. But, first of all, the commission is designed to be an independent regulatory commission. We are not specifically beholden to the Congress for what we do. The commission has six members; all are appointed by the president with the approval of a majority of the Senate. Further, the law says that of these no more than three shall be of the same political party, which, for all intents and purposes in this country, means that there are going to be three Democrats and three Republicans.

Because it requires four votes for the commission to do anything, it forces the parties to work together to enforce the law, to pass regulations, and to punish folks who violate it. I like that process. It ensures bipartisan administration of decision-making. The staff,

on the other hand, are hired civil servants and they must remain politically neutral. We cannot involve ourselves in any political activity. In exchange for that, we are protected by civil service rules so we cannot be fired for political reasons. It is true that we get our budget from the Congress; and there is a danger that we may annoy the Congress enough that they punish us by cutting our budget. We are in the position that that could happen. The state of California, by the way, which has a similar organization to ours, was thoughtful enough to establish a rule that the California Election Commission's budget cannot be cut by the state legislature. It can be added to, but it cannot be reduced; and this effectively prohibits the legislature from punishing the election commission for doing its job. It's a clever solution to that problem.

Q: How does the U.S. system compare to other nations in the way it ensures fair elections?

A: I've been, in fact, to twenty different countries, comparing their systems with ours. It's difficult to transplant ideas. What works well in one environment will not necessarily work well in another. In fact, when I try to explain our election process and our constitutional structure to visitors from other countries who come here, I try to emphasize that what works well in the United States may not work well in other countries. There are techniques that perhaps are transferable, but attempts to transfer whole systems and concepts aren't always successful. Sometimes countries get themselves into trouble because they borrow one idea from country A and another idea from country B and another idea from country C, and discover that they don't fit together.

The system must be designed for those who are going to have to live with it, and democracies are different from each other. British democracy is different from American democracy, the French democracy, the German democracy. They're like clothes: their resemblance is close, but they have to be tailored to fit. So I always urge foreign visitors to look at the alternatives available to them and try to find that set of alternatives that fits their needs.

Q: Some constitutional scholars argue that in a democracy, freedom to give unlimited amounts to the party or cause of your choice is an essential element of freedom of expression. How do you feel about that?

A: In recent legal opinions, the U.S. Supreme Court did choke a little on the notion of limiting what can be contributed. They did see the use of money as a method of expression.

But they also recognized an important state interest in limiting the influence of sources of great wealth. People have to decide for themselves, and they have to decide for themselves whether or not they want the best government money can buy. The question is: Is a freely elected government going to serve the people who elected it, or will that elected government be limited in its service to the people who funded their party or their campaign? If people want the government to be responsive to their votes rather than responsive to the people who funded the campaigns, then they're going to have to do something about it.

Q: One aspect of the Federal Election Commission is that it makes public the data it gathers on election contributions. How important is this part of your work?

A: There are those in the commission who believe it is absolutely essential, and perhaps the most important function we perform. Downstairs, in our agency—open entirely to the public and certainly to the media—are all the records of who has contributed what and to whom, when, and how much. We try to assist the media by summarizing the amounts; we also keep records on about 4,000 PACs and identify their interests. The principle is that all records are open, and that every political contribution, whether to a PAC directly or whether

to a candidate directly, is a matter of public record available to anyone, and in fact available over our web site. You can track candidates on our web site and see how much they're getting from whom.

Q: As you pointed out, one reason candidates need so much money is the cost of purchasing television time. Why not just pass laws to force television networks to provide the time, thereby lowering the cost of campaigns and the need for large donations?

A: That's certainly the way the Europeans do it. But then the Europeans are not burdened with the American Constitution. The problem we have is that under our Constitution it is very, very difficult to burden the media with this public purpose. The government has no right to do that. And so it isn't a question of its practicality, it's a question of its constitutionality. I don't see a solution to that problem. One reason we passed the elaborate campaign finance law that founded this agency is simply because we could not regulate the media. Truth be told, probably 80 percent of the political money in this country is spent on television and radio advertising; but with the Constitution we have and the prohibition against a government arrogant enough to control its media—a dangerous thought for us—there's no other solution.

Q: Your office does more than track political funding. What else do you do to ensure elections are fair?

A: Our work in election administration is also a vital part of what we do. Under our constitutional arrangement, elections are not a matter for the federal government—they are a matter for the states. There is no one federal law that says "this is the way we will do elections throughout the country"—even when these elections are for federal office, such as the presidency or the Congress. Instead, we have fifty different state laws; but even the states do not administer the day-to-day election process. That falls to the next level of government down—the county. So we don't have one great election authority in the United States. We don't even have 50 election authorities. The truth is we have 3,200 election authorities throughout the country that are responsible for conducting all elections in their respective counties, from elections for president of the United States down to the smallest office imaginable.

My job is to assist the states in improving the election laws that they pass and to assist the local election officials in improving the administration of the election process, by introducing new technology, by introducing new techniques and procedures to prevent fraud or to make the process more efficient and cost-effective.

Q: Can you mention one or two ways you've improved election administration at the local level?

A: Well, we've worked very hard on computerization of voter-registration lists. It is a terrible problem to maintain the list of voters in any locality, but the problem is made more serious by the fact that if you wish to corrupt an election, a dirty or an ill-kept registration list is the mechanism through which most likely you're going to do it. An inaccurate list may allow people to vote who are not entitled to vote, even voters who are dead or moved away may "vote." An inaccurate list—an inaccurate voter registration process—may allow people to vote in the names of others. A badly kept list may have the same name showing up in lots of different voting places, so a person may be able to vote many times. Many of these problems, indeed most of them, can be resolved by good computerization of the list.

I know a lot of countries are more interested, probably, in the automation of the vote recording and vote-counting process—by means of voting machines—in the erroneous belief that, in its benign indifference, the

voting machine will eliminate fraud. But the truth is that voting machines never create fraud and they can't prevent it. The people who learn to manipulate ballots can learn to manipulate the machines. I'm not enthusiastic about voting equipment. I am enthusiastic about using technological resources to develop really good voter registration lists.

Q: In your view, what is the most fundamental underlying rule for free and fair elections?

A: One person, one vote.

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How Fair Is Election Coverage?

by

Carolyn Barta

Americans have a vast array of news sources available from which to obtain information on the candidates and issues in this year's elections. Carolyn Barta, the national political writer for *The Dallas Morning News,* examines how fairly and how well the media do their job.

Every four years, the American news media gear up for one of the nation's top stories—the U.S. presidential election. Countless broadcast time and newspaper and magazine space are devoted to candidate speeches, campaign spending, analysis of television advertising, style, issue differences, and debates.

This year is no different, as planes and buses loaded with reporters and camera crews follow the incumbent president, Democrat Bill Clinton, Republican nominee Bob Dole, and their vice-presidential running mates.

The national conventions of the two major political parties this past summer bear witness to the media's obsession with presidential politics. Of the 35,000 people who attended each of the conventions—the Republican convention in San Diego and the Democrats in Chicago—15,000 at each were members of the media.

As Ed Haley, professor of government at Claremont McKenna College in California, says, "One of democracy's best shows is elections." And the American media have front row seats—as well as an awesome responsibility, scholars say.

Two-thirds of the American people depend on the media to be their main source of campaign information, according to a 1996 study by the Freedom Forum Media Studies Center of Columbia University in New York. Television is the predominant medium for 57 percent. Forty-three percent receive their information from newspapers, radio, magazines, and the Internet.

"While voters have some misgivings about media coverage of this year's presidential campaign, they're also relying heavily on journalists to get them the information they'll need to make up their minds in November," says Nancy J. Woodhull, executive director of the Freedom Forum Media Studies Center.

How the media fulfill this responsibility is a subject of some controversy in the United States.

"The American media cover elections skeptically, if not cynically," says Larry Sabato, a University of Virginia government professor who has written extensively on politics and the media. "They view their mission as one of contrast with the official view, the spin of the political consultants and the candidates themselves," he says.

"Spin" has become a much-used term in political coverage. It is the practice by which political associates offer an instant analysis of events and statements in an effort to cast their candidate in a favorable light. The more the campaigns try to put their own "spin" on things, the more the media try to seek the other side.

The TV networks, for example, rebelled against what they considered to be overly scripted and managed political conventions in August by cutting away to do interviews or commentary instead of showing the planned program.

David Bartlett, president of the Radio-Television News Directors Association, explains that the function of the journalist—indeed the fundamental purpose of a free press in a free society—is to act as a watchdog. "You can't be too skeptical," he says. "You can't be too critical. If anything, our media suffer from a lack of toughness in political coverage, not being too tough."

Complaints in recent years about coverage and the growing dominance of TV news have produced some changes in the way politics, the press and the American public connect.

They include greater involvement of talk radio and TV programs; more "citizen-based" journalism, which allows average Americans to help frame the issues; and "free time" on TV for presidential candidates. These trends offer a way for candidates to interact more directly with the public and escape the constraints of traditional coverage.

The Center for Media and Public Affairs, a non-partisan group in Washington which studied television news during the 1996 primaries, found traditional coverage too negative, too focused on who was winning or losing, and too journalist-centered.

"National television network news is still where people get most of their news.

And the image people get of journalists is that they are cynical, adversarial people who are doing all the talking and are not letting the public get a clear view of the candidates," says Richard Noyes, a spokesman for the center

According to the study, television journalists got six times as much air time as candidates in reports on the primaries. The average candidate "sound bite"—the actual time a candidate is heard talking—declined from 42 seconds in 1968 to a low of 7.2 seconds in 1996.

Bartlett dismisses the criticism. "The job of a journalist is not to simply stand back and let the candidates say their piece. If I'm the public, what I'm buying is the experience, the analysis, the skepticism of a competent journalist," Bartlett says. "That's what journalism is. The rest is either publicity or reprinting."

Noyes, however, points to a dramatic change in "aggressive TV reporting" of political campaigns between 1988 and 1992—a change he relates to the emerging power of CNN and cable TV in 1990 and 1991 with the coverage of the Gulf war.

The traditional networks of NBC, ABC and CBS felt people were "seeing the news before they had a chance to report it," he says. As a result, they began replacing their evening news summaries with more analysis and commentary.

Coverage by newspaper reporters differs somewhat from television because newspapers are held to stricter standards in regard to providing sources for stories, and to keeping commentary out of news stories. They also have the opportunity to write stories in greater depth.

Even so, Thomas E. Patterson, Syracuse University political science professor and author of Out of Order, a 1993 book about the power of the media, sees a changing role for the press in campaign coverage.

"The role of the press has changed from being purveyor of information to being a broker in the process," he says. "They're acting as the gatekeeper, bringing out certain things and not others."

During the 1996 primaries, he observes, while the candidates mostly focused on positive messages, news reports were largely negative. "In Dole's coverage, what stood out was a lot of questioning of his strength as a frontrunner, the forces allied against him, and when was he going to crumble," he says

Journalists justified this coverage, arguing that there were few real issue differences between candidates for the Republican nomination, with the exception of Patrick Buchanan.

David Bartlett of the Radio-Television News Directors defends shorter sound bites. "The world moves faster today than in 1968. The number of choices from which people can get their news and information is enormously greater in 1996 than in 1968. We didn't have CNN and C-Span in 1968," he notes.

C-Span covers events such as political conventions, campaign speeches and sessions of Congress uninterrupted, without the filter of the journalist, and has numerous viewer call-in opportunities. Indeed, media outlets have become so plentiful, scholars and journalists agree, that Americans have a diversity of news sources available to keep them well informed about their government, candidates, and key political issues.

As media analyst Richard Harwood commented at a forum sponsored by the

Washington-based Brookings Institute on the subject of "Democracy and the Press: A Fragile, Necessary Link":

"Whatever the shortcomings of our government system, they cannot be attributed to a lack of newspapers, TV channels, radio programs, magazines, and computer networks that make available an unending supply of generally reliable information that can be accessed by anyone."

Presidential candidates discovered in 1992 that they could bypass journalists by answering questions from the public directly on radio and TV call-in shows. The use of alternative or non-traditional media in 1992 grew to include candidate appearances on popular non-news programs, such as late-night comedy shows.

Some experts believe that TV, which is blamed for many of the excesses in campaign coverage, can be part of the correction, by providing "free time" to presidential candidates so they can address voters directly without journalists acting as "middle men."

Paul Taylor, a former political reporter for *The Washington Post*, has spearheaded the effort of the Free TV for Straight Talk Coalition, which is supported by five former network anchors, nine senators, and six former political party chairmen and others. Disenchanted with political reporting, Taylor became a foreign correspondent and, after witnessing South Africa's experiment with democracy, thought that America, where modern democracy was invented, could do a better job with its own presidential election.

He agrees that "in 1996, for consumers of political information, you have more outlets than any human beings ever had—chat shows, cable, C-Span, CNN, the Internet and conventional forms of communication. It's hard to make the case that the substance isn't there for the having.

"Some people do avail themselves of it, but the vast millions don't. When politics intersects with the vast masses, what they get is the quickie stuff, the seven-second sound bites and the 30-second attack ads. There," he says, "there is a substance gap."

The TV industry has come forward with a variety of free-time offers for the fall campaign, ranging from an hour of free time on election eve to unfiltered time for candidates on existing news programs. The coalition is pressing for two-and-a-half minutes of free time each weeknight for one month before the election, on each network.

Citizens-based or "public" journalism is another effort gaining steam in the United States. It is designed to look at politics through the eyes of citizens rather than those of the candidates, and projects are underway in more than 20 states by both the print and electronic media. New York University journalism professor Jay Rosen advocates the move toward such reporting, suggesting that the national media are more interested in covering campaigns from the viewpoint of the professionals, or the "political class."

"Most of the elite press, the national media, is interested in covering a campaign it allows the consultants to shape. Increasingly, enterprising journalists on the local level are taking on a different role, uncovering citizen concerns and espousing those as the true content of the campaign, and taking those concerns to the candidates," he says.

"It's a top-down vs. a bottom-up movement. One starts with candidates, the other starts with citizens," he explains.

Deborah Potter of the Poynter Institute for Media Studies in St. Petersburg, Florida, believes coverage is changing as a result of citizens-based journalism, which puts different "voices" into the campaign process. A former journalist, she was surprised when she began studying the media by how much reporters relied on sources within campaigns and the political industry. Now, they're beginning to talk more to voters.

A focal point of news coverage in the general election is always the debates. Presidential debates are scheduled for September 25, October 9 and 16, with a vice-presidential debate on October 2. Questions remain as to whether Ross Perot, as the Reform Party candidate, will be allowed to appear on all of the presidential debates.

Coverage of the Perot campaign in 1996 differs from 1992. Four years ago, there was extensive coverage into Perot's background, because he was largely unknown as a political figure. This year, coverage has related largely to formation of the Reform Party, under whose banner he is running. Since Perot's popularity in the polls has declined, journalists are expected to pay less attention to him, although he remains a factor in the general election campaign.

Questions have been raised about bias in the American media. Conservatives believe the media favor Democrats and have a pro-Clinton bias. That accounts for the growth of conservative talk radio and TV shows, they say.

At the Republican National Convention, campaign buttons which said in 1992, "Annoy the Media, Re-elect President Bush," said in 1996, "Annoy the Media, Elect Bob Dole."

The conservative Media Research Center has launched a $2.78 million campaign to spotlight an anticipated bias in political reporting in 1996. Republicans believe media bias against their party was demonstrated by a poll taken for the nonpartisan Freedom Forum that found almost nine of 10 Washington reporters voted for President Clinton.

Ken Walsh, senior White House correspondent for *U.S. News and World Report* and author of *Feeding the Beast: The White House Vs. the Press*, feels that the Washington press corps goes after whoever is in power, regardless of their individual voting habits.

During the fall campaign, he says, "I think we can count on the press picking up the cues from the campaigns as they hammer each other, and the press being unrelentingly critical."

Some Democrats attending their national convention believe the media have been rough on President Clinton and First Lady Hillary Clinton. But not all. "A lot of people have a big problem with the news media, but I don't," says Missouri delegate Mildred Conner. "We need the newspapers and the radio and the TV to get the information out."

If the press and the parties do their job, Ohio delegate Joe Rugola says, "then our message will get back to the American people, and then it will be their job to decide which direction they want the country to go in."

Financing Presidential Election Campaigns

by

Herbert E. Alexander

How to protect the integrity of the election process and yet respect the rights of free speech—that is the fundamental problem facing those who would like to reform campaign financing for American elections, observes Herbert E. Alexander. In the following article, Alexander, the director of the Citizens' Research Foundation and professor of political science at the University of Southern California, puts the challenges and efforts of recent reforms into historical perspective.

"The Presidency of the United States," wrote John Quincy Adams in 1828, "was an office neither to be sought nor declined. To pay money for securing it directly or indirectly, was in my opinion incorrect in principle." Despite the lofty sentiment expressed by the sixth president of the United States and the son of the second president, candidates in every election since George Washington first assumed the office, have spent money to secure the presidency.

Spending Patterns

In the early years, political funds were spent primarily for printing costs. Much of the presidential campaigning took place in newspapers and pamphlets subsidized by political factions favoring one or another candidate. In time, candidates adopted other means of spreading campaign messages, including campaign biographies, buttons and banners, and personally taking to the campaign trail. Radio was first

used in the 1924 campaign, and in 1952 television emerged as a primary means of communicating with voters.

As the size and population of the United States expanded and the means of campaigning for office developed, the costs of campaigning for office grew correspondingly. In 1860, Abraham Lincoln's winning general election campaign reportedly cost about $100,000, and his opponent Stephen Douglas's campaign about $50,000. One hundred years later, John Kennedy's campaign spent about $9.7 million to defeat Richard Nixon, whose campaign cost about $10.1 million.

In the eight presidential campaigns held since 1960, expenditures have continued to increase. Campaigns have become technologically more sophisticated and thus more expensive. In the 1992 general election campaign, the fifth in which public funds were provided, incumbent Republican George Bush had about $90 million spent by his campaign or on his behalf, including a public grant of $55.2 million. Democratic Party candidate Bill Clinton had more—$130 million—spent by his campaign or on his behalf, also including a public grant of $55.2 million.

The total cost of electing a president in 1992 was about $550 million. That sum includes not only the $220 million spent by or on behalf of the two major political party candidates in the general election; it also includes funds spent by all the candidates who sought their parties' nominations, by the nominating conventions of the parties, and by third-party and independent campaigns.

The costs of electing a president—some $550 million—represent about one-sixth of the nation's $3.2 billion ($3,200 million) political campaign bill in 1992. The remaining funds were spent to nominate and elect candidates for Congress ($678 million), to nominate and elect hundreds of thousands of state and local officials ($865 million), and to pay the costs of state and local ballot issue campaigns and administrative, fund-raising and other expenses of party and nonparty political committees.

This $3.2 billion ($3,200 million) political bill needs to be put in perspective. In 1992, governments at all levels in the United States—national, state, county and municipal—spent a total of $2.1 trillion ($2,100,000 million) in taxpayer money. The $3.2 billion ($3,200 million) spent on election campaigns, whose outcomes determine how such enormous sums of tax money are spent, amounts to a mere fraction of one percent of the total amount of government spending.

Sources of Funds

In the earliest presidential campaigns, collections from candidates and assessments upon officeholders were sufficient to pay the necessary costs. But as campaign costs increased, other sources of funds had to be found.

Andrew Jackson, first elected president in 1828, generally is credited with bringing in the "spoils system," rewarding with favors and government jobs those who had contributed to campaigns. With the end of the Civil War in 1865, those corporations and individuals who had amassed fortunes from American industry began to pay a major share of presidential campaign costs. Those sources increased in importance when the United States Congress passed the Civil Service Reform Act of 1883, which prohibited officers and

employees of the United States from seeking or receiving political contributions from each other. The Hatch Act of 1939 extended to almost all employees in the executive branch of the federal government the restrictions on political activity that the 1883 act imposed on Civil Service employees.

Reform Efforts

After the turn of the century, concern over the influence of corporations in the federal election process led to enactment of a number of campaign finance regulations. The first federal prohibition of corporate contributions was enacted in 1907. Forty years later, that ban was extended permanently to labor unions. The first federal campaign-fund disclosure law was passed in 1910. In 1911, the law was amended to require primary, convention and pre-election financial statements of all candidates for federal office and to limit the amounts that could be spent by candidates for the House and the Senate. A subsequent court decision, however, severely diminished the impact of the law. In 1925, federal campaign-finance legislation was codified and revised, though without substantial change, in the Federal Corrupt Practices Act, which remained the basic campaign-finance law until 1972.

Each time restrictive laws were passed, politicians devised new methods of raising money. As noted, when the assessment of government employees was prohibited, attention swung to corporate contributions. When they in turn were barred, candidates and parties sought gifts from wealthy individuals, including many corporate stockholders and officers. When the size of contributions to political committees was limited by the Hatch Act of 1940 in an attempt to restrict the influence of wealthy individuals, parties and politicians found other ways of raising funds.

Candidates also have sought small contributions, but until recently systematic efforts to do so did not meet with notable success. In 1964, Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater used mass mail solicitations to raise a substantial portion of his campaign funds. Since then, several presidential candidates have used that method with good results, notably Democrat Eugene McCarthy and independent candidate George Wallace in 1968, Democratic nominee George McGovern in 1972, and Ronald Reagan in his 1984 prenomination campaign.

In the 1970s, a new wave of political reform arose at both the federal and state levels. At the federal level, the results of those reform efforts—and of subsequent attempts to ease the burdens of laws imposed on candidates and committees—are embodied in the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 (FECA), the Revenue Act of 1971, and the FECA Amendments of 1974, 1976 and 1979. The basic law remains from the laws enacted in the 1970s, and no major changes have been enacted since.

Public Funding

In regard to presidential campaigns, the laws provide for optional public matching funds for qualified candidates in the prenomination period. To qualify for the matching funds, candidates seeking their parties' presidential nominations are required to raise $5,000 in private, individual contributions of $250 or less in at

least 20 states. Then the federal government matches each contribution from an individual to qualified candidates up to $250, although the federal subsidies may not exceed half the prenomination campaign spending limit, which was $27.6 million in 1992.

The federal government also provides public funds to pay the costs of the national nominating conventions of the two major political parties. In 1992, each of the parties received a grant of about $11 million. Minor parties are eligible for a partial convention subsidy if their candidates received more than five percent of the vote in the previous presidential election.

In the general election, major-party presidential candidates are eligible to receive public treasury grants to fund their campaigns. As noted, those grants amounted to $55.2 million each in 1992. Provisions also are made for partial public funding of qualified minor party and new party candidates.

The public funds provided in presidential campaigns are intended to help supply, or to supply completely, the money serious candidates need to present themselves and their ideas to the electorate. They also are meant to diminish or eliminate the need for money from wealthy donors and interest groups.

In a campaign's early stages, public funding is intended to make the nominating process more competitive and to encourage candidates to broaden their bases of support by seeking out large numbers of relatively small contributions. Candidates do so in a variety of ways, including direct mail appeals, fund-raising events, such as receptions and dinners, and one-on-one solicitation of donations by volunteer fund raisers.

The feasibility of public financing in the last five presidential campaigns depended on the taxpayers' willingness to earmark a small portion of their tax liabilities—$1 for individuals and $2 for married persons filing jointly—for the Presidential Election Campaign Fund by using the federal income tax checkoff on their tax forms. This procedure provided enough funds to cover the $175.4 million certified to 1992 presidential prenomination and general election candidates and to the major parties for their national nominating conventions. The 1992 public funding payouts were slightly less than in 1988, when $176.9 million in government funds were paid out. The amounts in each presidential election year vary according to the numbers of qualifying candidates and their fund-raising appeals. Earlier experience with payout costs were: $132.6 million in 1984; $101.6 million in 1980; and $71.4 million in 1976, the first time there were publicly funded presidential campaigns.

Although public acceptance of the program started slowly, it grew in the early years as taxpayers became more aware of the checkoff procedure. Since the amount earmarked for the fund peaked in 1981 at 28.6 percent of tax returns, the percentage of returns indicating that money should be earmarked declined to 17.7 percent in 1992. Because tax checkoff funds have been diminishing, a 1993 law increased the checkoff amount to $3 for individual taxpayers and $6 for a joint tax return.

Contribution and Expenditure Limits

The 1970s reform laws also imposed contribution and expenditure limits on all federal election campaigns, but the U.S. Supreme Court subsequently ruled that spending limits are permissible only in publicly financed campaigns, currently only presidential campaigns. Individuals may contribute no more than $1,000 per candidate per election, and multicandidate committees may contribute no more than $5,000 per candidate per election. General-election candidates who accept public funding, however, may not accept private contributions to further their campaigns, although they may accept private contributions, up to the limits specified, to help them defray the costs of complying with the election laws.

The contribution and expenditure limits are intended to control large donations, with their potential for corruption, to minimize financial disparities among candidates, and to reduce opportunities for abuse. Individuals and groups, however, may make unlimited independent expenditures in presidential and other federal election campaigns—that is, they may spend unlimited amounts on communications advocating the election or defeat of any candidate—as long as the spending takes place without consultation or coordination with any candidate's campaign committee. Substantial sums were spent independently in the 1980 presidential prenomination and general-election campaigns, leading some campaign participants to challenge the legality and constitutionality of such spending. A Supreme Court ruling, handed down after the 1984 general election, found in favor of those making independent expenditures. While awaiting the outcome of the legal challenge to their activity, groups and individuals spent $17.4 million independently to advocate the election or defeat of presidential candidates in 1984. In 1992, only $4.4 million was spent independently in the presidential campaigns.

Individuals and groups also may contribute to political party committees at various levels. Those committees in turn may spend money on behalf of their parties' presidential tickets. In 1992, Republican and Democratic Party committees spent considerable amounts in support of their presidential tickets for such activities as voter registration and turnout drives. Other notable sources of presidential campaign-related spending were labor organizations, which generally favored the Clinton-Gore ticket by publishing favorable communications and conducting voter registration and turnout drives of their own. Thus, even though public funding and the related expenditure limits are intended to control presidential campaign spending, there are still numerous legal ways in which substantial private funds may be spent to attempt to influence the general election outcome.

Finally, federal election law requires full and timely disclosure of campaign receipts and expenditures. The disclosure provisions are meant to help voters make informed choices among candidates and to make it possible to monitor compliance with the campaign-finance laws.

A Continuing Experiment

The fundamental problem facing those who would design a system of campaign-finance regulation for American election campaigns is how to protect the integrity of the election process and yet respect the rights of free speech and free association guaranteed by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. The regulatory system put in place in the 1970s represents an enormously ambitious effort to achieve that balance. The effort has not always been successful, as the inability of the regulations completely to control presidential general-election campaign spending indicates. But like American democracy itself, the current system of regulating presidential campaign financing is an experiment that will no doubt be subject to modification in the years to come.

Issues of Democracy, USIA Electronic Journals, Vol. 1, No. 13, Sept. 1996

Why Third Parties Score Limited Success in U.S.

by

David Pitts

For more than a century, U.S. politics has been dominated by two parties, the Democrats and the Republicans. In the following report, contributing editor David Pitts explains why this is so, and also assesses the chances of the current third-party efforts in the historical context.

Political parties were not envisaged by America's Founding Fathers, but they gradually took hold as the electorate expanded. By the late 1820s, two political parties—the Democrats and the Whigs—dominated the U.S. political system.

During the 1850s, a third political party—the Republicans—gained widespread popularity because of its opposition to slavery. But the two-party system persisted because the Republicans supplanted the Whigs. The last Whig president was Zachary Taylor, elected in 1848. It took the Republican Party only six years to move its candidate into the White House: Abraham Lincoln, the first Republican to be president, took office in 1861.

Since 1852, every U.S. president has been either a Republican or a Democrat. These two parties continue to dominate the U.S. political system, in contrast to most of the world's other democracies which are sustained by multiple parties.

This presidential election year is no exception. The Democrats, who renominated Bill Clinton, and the Republicans, who nominated Bob Dole as their presidential candidate, will dominate the campaign.

However, a third, possibly significant force, this year is the Reform Party, which nominated billionaire businessman Ross Perot as its candidate for president. Although the Reform Party and Perot are garnering considerable press attention, third-party bids have scored little success in the United States.

Foreign observers who wonder why this is so will find the answer in U.S. history and in the nature of the U.S. political system. Stephen Rockwood, author of *American Third Parties Since the Civil War,* cites several reasons why third parties have been unsuccessful in the United States:

- The U.S. elections outcome is based on a "winner-takes-all" voting concept, rather than proportional representation.
- The historic tradition in which the two parties act as "large umbrellas" for a variety of interests and ideological persuasions inhibits the formation of third parties.
- The media tend to concentrate on the two largest parties—Republicans and Democrats—rather than numerous smaller parties.

Earl Kruschke points out in his *Encyclopedia of Third Parties,* that the U.S. two-party system has its roots in the British tradition. The British election system also is based on a winner-takes-all vote. In both countries two parties "predominate in part because of the election system," he observes.

While there are a number of third parties in the United States—from the American Communist Party on the far left to scores of parties in the center and the far right—few have wielded significant political influence.

Since World War II, for example, there have been only four noteworthy third-party presidential bids:

- In 1948, two independent candidates for president challenged the Republican candidate, Thomas Dewey, and the Democratic contender, then-President Harry S. Truman. On the right, Strom Thurmond—currently a Republican senator from South Carolina—ran as the nominee of the Dixiecrats or States Rights' Party, a group of dissident Democrats in favor of racial segregation. On the left, Henry Wallace, a former vice president under Franklin D. Roosevelt, ran as the nominee of the Progressive Party. Thurmond won 22 percent of the vote in the South, the only area of the country in which he campaigned. Wallace garnered slightly more than two percent of the vote. Despite the fact that these candidacies were considered more damaging to President Truman than to Dewey, Truman won the four-man race.
- In 1968, George Wallace, the pro-segregation governor of Alabama, ran as the presidential nominee of the American Independent Party. Wallace, who won 13.8 percent of the vote, was thought to have taken votes away from both major-party candidates, Democrat Hubert Humphrey and Republican Richard Nixon. Nixon narrowly won the election.

- In 1980, Illinois Congressman John Anderson ran as the presidential nominee of the National Unity Movement. It was assumed that Anderson, a moderate, would take votes away from both the Democratic nominee, President Jimmy Carter, and the Republican nominee, Ronald Reagan. In the end, Anderson won seven percent of the vote which hardly dampened Reagan's landslide victory.
- In 1992, Ross Perot ran as the presidential nominee of United We Stand America, the precursor of the Reform Party. Perot's strong showing—19 percent of the vote—probably hurt the Republican candidate, President George Bush, thus helping elect Democratic nominee Bill Clinton.

In 1992, Perot ran with little party organization, a contrast to this year when he will benefit from the nationwide organization that the Reform Party has built. According to spokeswoman Sharon Holman, the party is "absolutely building for the long haul," attempting to create a permanent, viable third party in the United States.

Whatever effect the Reform Party and its presidential nominee have in the presidential race this year—and current polls show Perot will do less well than he did in 1992—their impact in races for the U.S. Congress will be negligible.

Historically, third parties have had little impact at the congressional level. Only the two major parties have the resources to mount campaigns in all the congressional districts across the United States and this is unlikely to change. Currently, there is only one independent in the U.S. House of Representatives—Bernard Sanders, a socialist from Vermont. There are no independents or third-party members now serving in the U.S. Senate.

Even if Perot had won his bid for the presidency in 1992, he would have faced a Congress almost entirely composed of lawmakers from the Republican and Democratic parties. Spokeswoman Holman says the Reform Party wants to challenge the two-party domination of Congress, as well as the presidency, but lacks the resources to do both in 1996.

Accordingly, the Reform Party will concentrate on the presidential race, and will limit itself to backing "those candidates, either Democrats or Republicans, who endorse the principles of the Reform Party and sign a pledge that they will not engage in negative campaigning," Holman explains. But the Reform Party "intends to field its own candidates for Congress, as well as president, in future national U.S. elections," she adds.

However, observers see the Reform Party in for a rocky ride if history is any guide.

"Most third parties have tended to flourish for a single election and then die, fade, or be disbanded into one of the major parties," says John Bibby, an expert on political parties at the University of Wisconsin. It is doubtful that the 1996 elections will challenge that assessment.

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A County Prepares for the Voters

by

Jim Morrill

It takes a lot of work and preparation to run an election smoothly and fairly. Jim Morill, a political reporter for *The Charlotte Observer,* describes how a North Carolina county prepares for election day.

Even after 26 years of running Mecklenburg County's elections, Bill Culp still fidgets with nervous energy before every election. He rarely sleeps the night before. He arrives at his office by 5:30 in the morning and inhales a ritual breakfast of bacon, eggs and grits. Then he takes a few minutes for a radio or TV interview.

Finally, at 6:30, polls open, voters begin casting their ballots, and Bill Culp's long day begins in earnest.

For Culp and millions of other Americans across the country, election day is the final sprint in the long marathon of democracy. And it's not just candidates running hard to the finish line.

Political parties, campaign volunteers and high-priced consultants all play their roles in selling candidates to voters. But when voters finally go to the polls, it's up to election workers to make sure their votes are cast and counted efficiently and fairly.

At the heart of that task are people like Bill Culp. At 53, he's been at the job more than half his life. He's director of elections in Mecklenburg County, home to almost 600,000 people and North Carolina's largest city, Charlotte. He has 14 full-time employees on his staff.

A former high school history teacher and Vietnam veteran, Culp sports thinning hair, a ready smile and undiminished enthusiasm for his role in the democratic process.

"I see my role as basically a person with a position of trust," he says. "I think you have to have the trust of the public and the trust of the candidates. There's a lot of mistrust in the world of politics."

Culp has watched the world of politics beyond the county line. This year he traveled to Jordan as a guest of the State Department to advise elections officials there, and took the occasion to visit Israel during its spring elections. Meanwhile, delegations of election workers, government officials and journalists from countries such as Chile, Austria, Panama and New Zealand have visited him.

Culp says that in his meetings with foreigners he has learned that citizens from multi-party democracies are often intrigued by America's two-party system. They're curious about voting rules that vary from state to state. They're "completely overwhelmed" by how prominent a role the media play in American elections. And they're simply interested in how American elections work.

Mecklenburg County offers a good example of how the American system operates at the local level. The county is divided into 160 precincts. Each precinct has a polling place at a church, school or neighborhood center. The day before an election, workers deliver 975 electronic voting machines, distributed in accordance to a precinct's population and typical turnout.

On election morning, an army of 1,000 persons mobilizes to handle the potential electorate of 365,000 voters. It includes people like Richard Mills, a 38-year-old roofer and chief precinct judge in his south Charlotte district. Like other such judges, he oversees a handful of assistants including one Democratic and one Republican judge.

Precinct judges, chosen by the parties and the county elections board, make sure voters are properly registered and get the right ballot for their particular voting district.

"It's worthwhile making sure that people are there to vote…to make sure things run smoothly," says Mills, who is paid $160 for a 15-hour day.

Ensuring that things run smoothly is the job of a staff of 30 at the main elections office. They answer calls all day from voters or workers in the field.

Also on duty are the three members of the county elections board. They oversee operations, settle disputes and preside over the opening of absentee ballots, cast by people out of town on election day. Unlike Culp and his staff, who are essentially career local-government employees, the three members of the elections board hold two-year political appointments. Because North Carolina now has a Democratic governor, two of the three members are Democrats. But partisanship rarely matters in supervising an election.

"We're fortunate in Mecklenburg County…to have consistently had boards willing to put the good of the community ahead of partisan politics," says Billy

Miller, the board's lone Republican.

Throughout election day, as campaign workers hustle to bring voters to the polls, Culp is troubleshooting. He visits precincts in his teal Ford Bronco, rallying his troops and making sure there are no rules violations. Campaigning, for example, is forbidden within 50 feet of a voting place.

At 7:30 p.m., polls close. Richard Mills and the other precinct judges remove from each voting machine a cartridge electronically inscribed with every vote. The cartridges are locked in a special bag and delivered to the elections office, where the imprints, the votes, are counted by computer. The results are announced immediately, and nowadays posted on the elections' office Internet site.

Similar rituals take place in North Carolina's 99 other counties and in states across the country. For Culp, who oversees two or three election days a year (state and national elections in even-numbered years and municipal elections in odd-numbered years), the closing of polls marks a pause rather than an end to the elections process.

Voter registration is an ongoing process, as is the recruiting and training of temporary election-day workers. Culp devotes considerable time to educating the public about elections, speaking regularly to school and civic groups.

Like Culp, thousands of Americans work hard to run the engine of democracy. They make sure votes are cast and counted. Candidates bombard the airwaves with reasons to vote for them and against their opponent. Newspapers and radio and television stations do their best to inform voters about what candidates are saying, and how much of it you can believe.

For all their efforts, they can't make people vote.

Too often voter turnout is dismal. Three years ago, for instance, less than seven percent of Charlotte voters came out for municipal primary elections. This past May, only 19 percent of eligible voters participated in the presidential primary elections—partly perhaps because by that time Bob Dole had clinched the Republican Party nomination and Bill Clinton was unopposed in the Democratic Party.

"It makes me feel a little disappointed that people don't seem to take it more positively here," says Culp. "People are a little jaded." In Israel and Jordan he observed people excited about the opportunity to cast a vote.

"We seem to have gotten a little blase. To some degree we've lost our wonderment about the whole process of electing our leaders."

Issues of Democracy, USIA Electronic Journals, Vol. 1, No. 13, Sept. 1996

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Article Alert

What's New in Democracy and Human Rights

Cardoso, Fernando Henrique. "In Praise of the Art of Politics" (*Journal of Democracy,* vol. 7, no. 3, July 1996, pp. 7–19)

This essay examines the importance of politics in meeting the challenges of representative democracy in Brazil. President Cardoso sees a need to inject new life into representative democracy because of a growing lack of interest in politics, low voter turnout, and hostility toward politicians. He says the United States' task is to enhance and update democracy so that it will continue to prevail worldwide.

Carney, Eliza Newlin. "Defending PACs" (*National Journal,* vol. 28, no. 28, July 13, 1996, pp. 1518–1583)

Carney looks objectively at the failure of the most recent bipartisan effort in the U.S. Senate to reform congressional campaign funding. The article examines the traditional arguments for curbing PAC influence, weighed against the idea that special interest activities constitute a form of expression needed to maintain a varied, democratic society. Most interesting is Carney's reporting on the range of new campaign reform proposals emerging from U.S. think tanks, which are open for discussion in a cyberspace forum, as well as other state-level reforms.

Chaffee, Steven and Stacey Frank. "How Americans Get Political Information: Print Versus Broadcast News" (*The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* vol. 546, July 1996, pp. 48–58)

"People who rely on television alone get less news than do newspaper and magazine readers," say authors Chaffee and Frank. However, contrary to earlier research, they find that television news is informative for American voters, albeit in ways different from newspapers. Television news provides more information about candidates; newspapers, more about parties. Based on new research, the academicians and former newspaper reporters conclude: "Reading news is characteristic of politically active citizens; television is a bridging medium, familiarizing young people and immigrants with the American political system."

Griffin, Susan; and others. "Do-It-Yourself Politics" (*Utne Reader,* no. 76, July/August 1996, pp. 43–59)

The independent writers and editors of *Utne Reader* have compiled a series of articles that explore the traditions of civic participation and democratic values. The focus ranges from a fundamental and thought-provoking look at "integrity" in politics to an essay on how "imagination" plays into civic aspirations. Billed as "alternative media," the journal's style and focus is very contemporary.

Haskell, John. "Reforming Presidential Primaries: Three Steps for Improving the Campaign Environment" (*Presidential Studies Quarterly,* vol. 26, no. 2, Spring 1996, pp. 380–390)

Drake University's Haskell suggests that nomination of presidential candidates has degenerated into a political bazaar characterized by too much money and meaningless discourse. He believes that this inefficiency can be alleviated by, first, moving the presidential primary to an earlier date in the election year. Second, he suggests having five small to medium-sized states hold primaries on the same first day. Third, instead of a single vote, voters should be allowed to cast votes for all candidates of whom they approve.

Kemper, Vicki and Deborah Lutterbeck. "The Country Club" (*Common Cause,* vol. 22, no. 1, Spring/Summer 1996, pp. 16–35)

Editor Kemper and staff writer Lutterbeck look at how an elite group of corporations, unions and super–rich individuals is reaping great rewards with huge "soft money" contributions. They point out that with these unregulated contributions to America's major political parties, these so-called "country club" members help set the political agenda, impact the outcomes and, in many ways, run the country.

Schell, Jonathan. "The Uncertain Leviathan" (*Atlantic Monthly,* vol. 278, no. 2, August 1996, pp. 70–78)

Schell makes the case that the American political realm is distinctly divided into two sides: political professionals (politicians, their staffers, advisers, and consultants, and the news media), and political amateurs (the voters). He argues that the bulk of contemporary American political activity consists of the interaction between professional politicians and the media, with the majority of the voters standing on the sidelines as somewhat disinterested and uninformed observers of this interplay.

Thomas, Bill and Ann McBride. "Q: Was the GOP Proposal to Reform Campaign Finance a Good Idea?" (*Insight on the News,* vol. 12, no. 31, August 19, 1996, pp. 24–27)

Thomas and McBride are the two strongest spokesmen for and against the House of Representatives' version of proposed legislation on congressional campaign reform. In this article, they briefly present the arguments, reflecting general public debate on campaign financing. The draft bill was defeated in the House on July 25, 1996. Senate efforts were blocked in late June.

Internet Sites

On Democracy and Human Rights Themes

Please note that USIA assumes no responsibility for the content and availability of those non-USIA resources listed below which reside solely with the providers:

Fundamental U.S. Documents

U.S. Constitution
http://www.usia.gov/HTML/consteng.html

Français
http://www.usia.gov/HTML/constfr.html

Español
http://www.usia.gov/HTML/constes.html

Bill of Rights
http://www.usia.gov/usa/aboutusa/billeng.htm

Français
http://www.usia.gov/usa/aboutusa/billfr.htm

Español
http://www.usia.gov/usa/aboutusa/billes.htm

Declaration of Independence
http://www.usia.gov/usa/aboutusa/deceng.htm

Français
http://www.usia.gov/usa/aboutusa/decfr.htm

Español
http://www.usia.gov/usa/aboutusa/deces.htm

The Federalist Papers
gopher://spinaltap.micro.umn.edu/11/Ebooks/By%20Title/Fedpap

U.S. Government

Executive Branch
http://www.vote-smart.org/executive/

Legislative Branch
http://www.vote-smart.org/congress/

U.S. Senate
gopher://ftp.senate.gov

U.S. House of Representatives
http://www.house.gov

Judicial Branch
http://www.vote-smart.org/judiciary/

The Cabinet
gopher://198.80.36.82/11s/usa/politics/cabinet

Election-Related Sites

Major Political Parties, Platforms and Candidates

Republican National Party
http://www.rnc.org/

Republican Party Platform
http://rnc.org/hq/platform96/

Bob Dole Home Page
http://www.dole96.com

Democratic National Committee
http://www.democrats.org

Democratic Party Platform
http://www.democrats.org/party/convention/pltdft96-2.html

Bill Clinton: Clinton/Gore '96 Campaign Home Page
http://www.cg96.org

Major Third Parties, Platforms and Candidates

Reform Party
http://www.reformparty.org/

Reform Party Platform
http://www.reformparty.org/convention/platform.htm

Ross Perot
http://www.reformparty.org/convention/perot.htm

Libertarian National Party
http://www.lp.org/lp

Libertarian National Party Platform
http://www.lp.org/lp/platform

Harry Browne
http://www.HarryBrowne96.org

Green Parties of North America
http://www.rahul.net/greens

The Green Party has no single platform, but rather many that are adopted by various state chapters.
http://www.greens.org/plats.html

Ralph Nader
http://www.rahul.net/cameron/nader

Congressional and State Elections

A clickable map guide to elections nationwide.
http://www.rollcall.com/election/map.html

Other Election Websites

An annotated list of other election home pages that have excellent sources of information.

CNN/Time's All Politics
A collaborative effort of CNN and *Time* magazine, it covers all aspects of the 1996 campaign and includes several multimedia efforts which set this site apart from the rest.

http://allpolitics.com/info/contents.shtml

Campaign Central Homepage

One of the best sites on the Web for election information. Not only gives the standard sites for the candidates, parties, etc., but also gives other links to U.S. government sites, including an international site that includes other governments and electoral processes.

http://www.clark.net/ccentral/home.html

International site

http://www.clark.net/ccentral/internat.htm

Debate Sites '96

Everything you ever wanted to know about the debates for the 1996 U.S. presidential election.

http://www.debates96.org/

Federal Election Commission

The FEC's primer for citizen participation in the federal electoral process.

http://www.fec.gov

Foreign Media Reaction to U.S. Politics

Part of USIA's U.S. Elections '96 website.

http://www.usia.gov/elections.mr.htm

Politics Now

One of the most comprehensive campaign sites available, "PoliticsNow" is maintained by ABC News, *The National Journal, The Washington Post, The Los Angeles Times, Newsweek* magazine, and "The Hotline," an on-line election newsletter.

http://www.politicsnow.com/

Project Vote-Smart

A grass-roots organization, Vote-Smart encourages Americans to learn about all the campaigns and elections, and to participate in them.

http://www.vote-smart.org/campaign_96/presidential/

Slate

The first truly on-line journal of political and social commentary, created especially for the World Wide Web, owned and operated by Microsoft. "Slate" is edited by Michael Kinsley, former editor of the *New Republic* magazine, and TV commentator and debater on CNN's "Crossfire."

http://www.slate.com

U.S. Elections '96

USIA's own coverage of "Elections '96."

http://www.usia.gov/elections/index.htm

Français

http://www.usia.gov/elections/frindex.htm

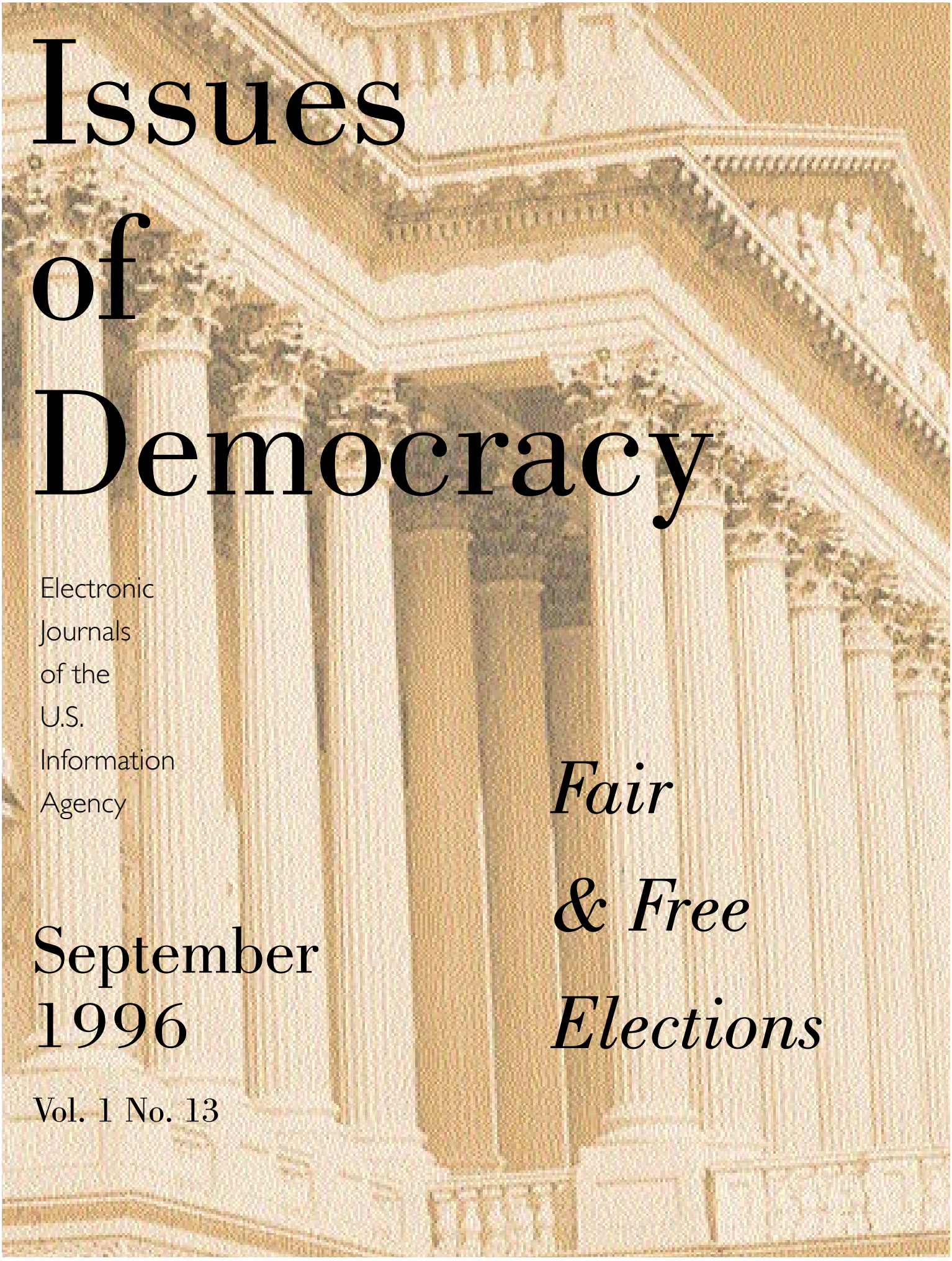
Español

http://www.usia.gov/elections/spindex.htm

U.S. News Online: Election '96

Daily political news from the respected conservative magazine *U.S. News and World Report;* includes news briefs, analysis, commentary from the magazine's pundits, and an election calendar.

http://www.agtnet.com/usnews/wash/election.htm



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